

neither has man's natural religion, but the lack of education (ignorance, not religion) in an individual debars him of the opportunity of rightly appropriating Christianity or religion to himself in progressive fruitfulness. Christianity has passed under dark clouds of ignorance and superstition and it has not "degenerated into mysticism" yet, but is the same noble, uplifting, comforting and regenerating power that it was in the beginning. Every Christian should be interested in and labor for the promotion of righteousness by the great means of education. To be a disciple is to be a learner. As students in the Master's school let us make a thorough preparation for the examination.

South Haven, Kans.

HARD TO SETTLE

B. C. MOOMAW

A correspondent of the *Gospel Messenger* writes a most unanswerable argument against the "Order," to which the editor of that journal replies with the customary scarecrow stuff: "If we give up the order, the church will at once plunge into worldly fashion." That is the substance of his defense, and it would certainly seem to indicate that as a matter of conscience plainness has an awfully slim hold upon the membership of that church. They, especially the sisters, need an "order of dress," a uniform, a regalia, prescribed and enforced by Annual Meeting, otherwise they will go to the world pellmell, and dress like sinners. If scriptural plainness has no firmer hold than that upon the conscience, of what possible moral value is an order, or uniform? Its only result is to encourage hypocrisy. We are unable to see how the sisters can feel very much complimented by the opinion of their editor. He tells them plainly that without the order they will plunge right headlong into the sin of fashion. "To permit everybody to dress as they please, simply means the surrender of plainness." We suppose that if they are satisfied with this moral picture in which they are exhibited as having no conscience or principle in the matter, it is certainly none of our lookout, except to congratulate our sisters, as well as the lady members of other communions, that they are not involved in this flattering estimate of their Christian character.

But the editor's opinion of his own sisters is grossly unjust. They may have no conscience in regard to the "order"; and as a matter of fact great numbers of them have no conscience in regard to the "order," except to reject it, for it is an unreasonable as well as an unscriptural thing. They are intelligent enough to also reject the deduction that the order, and that alone, represents scriptural plainness, and they do not believe the statement that the other churches have plunged into sinful fashions, for the statement is not true. As a matter of fact the vast majority of church members of all denominations dress reasonably and decently, and it is a mere scarecrow to be always

shouting "sinful fashions" at people who do not wear bonnets, or dress so as to be as conspicuous for oddity as a vulgar woman for flounces and feathers.

The history of the churches most conclusively demonstrates that every attempt to enforce moral duties by ecclesiastical legislation has resulted not only in failure, but in positive harm, for it is a policy which in a most direct manner puts a premium upon hypocrisy. All the other churches have found that out long ago, and the growing intelligence of the G. B. brethren will soon find it out for them. Anyone ought to see what an important principle is involved, the principle of *voluntary* and *conscientious* obedience to a gospel of Christian propriety, as against an *enforced* and therefore *involuntary* obedience to a requirement which otherwise you would not obey. It makes plenty of difference to justify the rending of a church. It has been often charged against us that we divided the church so as to enjoy the liberty of dressing as we please. Yes, we admit that our members dress as they please, but then the vast majority of them *please to dress in a becoming Christian manner*, and that is infinitely to be preferred to an "order" which can only be maintained by the severest legislative rules and penalties. It is for the great principle of *voluntary*, and therefore *sincere* obedience to an *unmutilated* gospel that the Brethren church stands. We have only to continue to stand upon that ground intelligently and firmly to fully justify our separate existence, not only in the growth of our own organization, but in the reformation of the body from which we came, a reformation which is progressing as rapidly as it safely can. But let our pastors not neglect to firmly and clearly set forth the moral duties of the gospel in regard to all matters of Christian propriety, and thereby create, sustain and strengthen both a public sentiment and a conscience in the direction of right living, according to the gospel, interpreted by the noblest conceptions of duty and privilege.

THE END OF CREATION

W. D. FURRY

There are a few questions that men will never cease to ask. There are also a few questions that will continue to thrust themselves upon men for consideration. One such question is "What is the end of Creation? To what are all things tending? Plato held that back of all visible objects are abstract ideas and that all concrete things are only the expression of something that had pre existence in abstract thought. The general idea antedates any particular idea. To know anything completely is impossible without a knowledge of the general idea. The world must first have existed as an idea in the mind of God. If we could see God's thought touching Creation what should we behold? Are all things now what they always have been and always will be or is Creation a continuous process not yet complete?

Evolution unmistakably teaches that Creation is a continuous process and points forward toward a far off golden age; and we cannot keep ourselves from asking "What will be the condition of things when evolution is finished and man has reached his final state. Men nowhere are satisfied with what is but are ever asking about what is to be. This tendency characterizes all literature. The world's poets have ever had visions of a future in which the processes now at work would be completed. Philosophers in every age have dreamed of ideal states which were their conceptions of what the race will become when perfected. The Bible also is filled with this thought. The distinguishing characteristic of the literature both of the Old Testament and the New is that of a *Fore looking*. The prophecies of Isaiah thrill with ideals of an age when swords shall be beaten into plow-shares and spears into pruning-hooks and when there shall be no one to injure or destroy in all God's holy mountain. The writings of St. Paul teem and throb with prophecies of the coming glory; while the seventeenth of John, the most sublime chapter of the New Testament, gives to all such prophecies the sanctity of the Savior's prayer.

The Bible everywhere represents the Creation as in an imperfect condition. It is good as it is now. But its present condition is imperfect because its end is not yet realized. The whole creation is in a process toward something better. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain." "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the redemption of the body."

In the individual this is true. Within each man there are two men, two forces, one evil and the other good that contend for mastery. No man is fully at peace with himself. The more we think and the farther we see the more real and intense the struggle becomes. This is the experience of every individual. This struggle is between the animal and the man. Some one has said that the human body was a cage in which was confined a wild beast and the pure spirit. The problem with each individual is, which of these two shall go down. The contest has been going on for ages and is not yet finished. On the whole man is getting farther and farther away from the brute. Man is the victor now more frequently than ever before. Sensuality, envy, jealousy and all that characterizes the animal is less rampant than ever before.

The same struggle appears in society. Here selfishness is rampant. Every man for himself has been the principle since the world began. Individuality and brotherliness represent the opposing forces. The weak are the slaves of the strong, the ignorant of the learned, the poor of the rich. Capital is arrayed against labor, blue blood against common blood, wealth against poverty. But things are not as terrible as they once were. The tendency toward Socialism is very apparent. A better day is dawning. The rapid growth of centralization in our